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On November 3, 1900, my son took a Purple Sandpiper (*Tringa maritima*) in Ashbridge's Bay. There were three in the flock, and the other two have been since taken.

On September 1, 1900, a Yellow Rail (*Porzana noveboracensis*) was taken at Toronto and brought to me alive. It is thriving, and it is very interesting to hear its different calls.—J. H. AMES, *Toronto, Ontario*.

**Sexual Difference in Size of the Pectoral Sandpiper** (*Tringa maculata*).—In connection with my note in 'The Auk' (Vol. XVI, April, 1899, p. 179), I have lately run across the following reference which seems of interest. From John Murdoch's account of the birds observed at Point Barrow, Alaska (see Lt. P. H. Ray's Report of the Expedition, 1885, p. 111) I quote the following: "There is frequently a great disparity of size between the two sexes. A comparison of the large series we collected shows that the average length of the female is about three quarters of an inch less than that of the male, but that the smallest female was fully an inch and a half shorter than the largest male. The difference in size is so marked that the natives noticed it and insisted that the small females were not Aibwúkia, but Niwiliwilúk (*Ereunetes pusillus*)." Certainly such facts should be in our manuals.—REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

**Great Gray Owl in Wyoming.**—During the latter part of last month, September, 1900, in company with my brother, the State Engineer, I visited the Alpine Lake region of the western slopes of the lofty Wind River Mountains. On the 26th we were at the hunting lodge of Wm. Wells, one hundred and fifty miles north of the Oregon Short Line railroad. This lodge is known to the post office department as Wells post office, and is the end of the mail route which carries the mail by stage from Opal station three times a week. Among the trophies of the hunt, with which the walls of Mr. Wells's lodge are decorated, I noted a Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex cinerea*). The bird was one of the largest of the species, the wing measuring  $19\frac{1}{2}$  ins. and the tail 13 ins.

Inquiry developed the fact that Mr. Wells killed the bird with his snowshoe pole in April, 1899. He stated the snow at the time was between three and four feet deep and as he was returning home on his snowshoes he saw the bird sitting in a low spruce tree not far from the lodge. He approached easily, and knocked the bird from its perch with his snowshoe pole, as stated above. Mr. Wells said further that it was the first and only owl of the kind he had seen during a residence of several years at the lodge.

I make this note because this is the first Great Gray Owl I have met with in Wyoming. Two of the hunters' guides employed by Mr. Wells, told me they had seen this owl in the mountains, but as they had never killed the bird I am inclined to question their identification. However, I think it quite probable the Great Gray Owl may be a rare winter resident

in the higher mountainous and densely wooded tracts of the northern half of the State. Wells post office is located in the margin of a dense pine and spruce forest at the western base of the lofty Wind River range of mountains, in Uinta County, Wyoming, and its elevation, by aneroid barometer, taken the day we were there, was 8,000 feet. — FRANK BOND, *Cheyenne, Wyo.*

**Breeding of the Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii alnorum*) near Plainfield, New Jersey.** — During a visit to Ash Swamp, three miles east of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st of July, 1899, I was surprised to find the Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii alnorum*) a common species there.

My identification was confirmed by Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr., who examined a bird-of-the-year secured on August 6, 1899.

Circumstances pointed to its breeding here, and my experience during the past summer proves that it does so, for on every visit to the swamp I found the shy little flycatchers among the alders. These dates include May 30, June 17 and 24, and July 8, 15, 22 and 29.

The species is rather numerous and generally distributed throughout the swamp (which is less than one square mile in area), frequenting chiefly the alders along the streams and edges of the woods. Elsewhere in the vicinity of Plainfield I have found it only during the migrations.

I have not yet succeeded in finding an occupied nest, but discovered a deserted nest containing one egg, which may belong to this species. On July 29 I came upon one of these birds with a brood of full-grown young and saw one of the latter fed by its parent.

I believe this to be the first positive record of the breeding of this species south of northwestern Connecticut.

Its three congeners of the eastern United States all occur in this vicinity. The Least Flycatcher is a common summer resident, the Green-crested Flycatcher is a rare summer resident, and the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is a fairly common transient visitor.

The avi-fauna of this region is decidedly Carolinian. — W. D. W. MILLER, *Plainfield, N. J.*

**The Raven in Polk County, North Carolina.** — On the morning of February 15, 1897, I saw a Raven as it passed over the mountain village of Tryon, Polk County, N. C. Tryon is said to have an elevation of about 1500 feet, and is situated on a ridge leading up from the Piedmont Region to the peaks of Melrose and Hogback, the latter in South Carolina. — LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco.*

**Song of the Western Meadowlark.** — Referring to the comment of G. S. Mead in his letter of August 18, 1900, printed in the October number of 'The Auk,' relative to the musical ability of *Sturnella magna neg-*  
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